

# Fiscal Note

*Fiscal Services Division*



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**SF 2298** – Attendance at Child In Need of Assistance Proceedings (LSB 5446SV)  
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Fiscal Note Version – New

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## **Description**

**Senate File 2298** relates to the attendance of a child at juvenile court hearings or meetings during the pendency of a child in need of assistance (CINA) case. The Bill requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to allow the child to attend all such hearings and meetings unless the attorney for the child finds the child's attendance is not in the best interest of the child. The Bill also requires the DHS to maintain a written record detailing the reasons for excluding the child from a hearing or meeting. The Bill provides for a presumption that it is in the best interest of a child 14 years or older to attend hearings and all staff or family meetings related to placement options or services during the pendency of a CINA case involving the child.

## **Assumptions**

- The DHS staff will facilitate transportation for children in out-of-home placements for Juvenile Court proceedings and meetings.
- In calendar year 2009, there were approximately 1,033 children per month that were age 14 or older in out-of-home placement and CINA. Approximately 15.0% (155) of these children are not currently participating in hearings and meetings on their behalf for a variety of reasons.
- Juvenile Court hearings are held on average two times per year in the child's home county however, the children are often placed several hours away from their home community. Each transport will take 8 hours on average roundtrip.
- Two Social Worker 2's (SW2) would need to accompany the child per current DHS policy. Due to the estimated increases in travel and the increased number of children that would be attending hearings and meetings, a total of three SW2's would be needed to implement the provisions of this Bill.
- Transportation costs are estimated to be 450 miles per roundtrip at 35.75 cents per mile.
- Federal funding will partially offset the total cost by \$47,000 in FY 2011 and FY 2012.

## **Fiscal Impact**

This Bill will result in additional estimated cost to the General Fund of \$202,000 for FY 2011 and \$210,000 for FY 2012.

## **Sources**

Department of Human Services

/s/ Holly M. Lyons

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The fiscal note for this bill was prepared pursuant to **Joint Rule 17**. Data used in developing this fiscal note is available from the Fiscal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency upon request.

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